



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Richard L. Steinberg
District 106

February 24, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up**
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up recently provided its recommendations to the FCC. I support the efforts by the Joint Board to address the issues concerning Lifeline and Link Up. As our country continues to rise from the worst economic recession since *The Great Depression*, free Lifeline service is fundamental to low-income families and their struggle to stay connected to their families, potential employers and above all, emergencies.

I support the Board's recommendation that the Commission should look for ways to adopt regularity on areas such as verification procedures and sampling criteria that would apply to all Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) in order to minimize waste, fraud and abuse. However, one area of concern is the discussion of capping low-income support. Historically, the low-income support of the fund has had a very low penetration rate and while cost has grown in the low-income support, it is still minimal compared to the area of High Cost. Similarly, it makes little sense to consider adding mandatory (even minimal) monthly subscriber fees for Lifeline users, which would present an unnecessary administrative burden on both carriers and consumers. The best approach to decreasing fraud and abuse is establishment of an eligibility database.

Please keep in mind that low-income support is cyclical. During a time of economic downturn, such as so many are seeing now, enrollment will be higher. As the economy improves and employment rises, there will be less need for enrollment. This service can help provide the necessary tools that so many struggling individuals need to get back on their feet.

Civil Justice Subcommittee
Judiciary Committee
Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee
Transportation & Highway Safety Subcommittee

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I urge the Commission to consider these recommendations outlined in the report. However, the Commission should not adopt measures or practices that hinder the Lifeline subscriber such as capping support or adopt policies that limit competition in a market that has been largely ignored for decades.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Steinberg
Florida State Representative, District 106